

TITLE: Prayer and Fasting

Scripture used: Matthew 4:1-2 (NLT)

OVERVIEW

Big Idea:

As we start our approach to Easter, Pastor Hurmon used today's scripture to remind us of Jesus' time in the wilderness and how he was exposed to temptations. As followers of Jesus, we must reproduce the patterns - the character, practices, vision & values - of Christ. Jesus was 30 years old and about to launch his public ministry when he was "led by the spirit" into the wilderness for a time of concentrated prayer and fasting. He was tempted by the devil, as a sort of preparation for the ordeals to come, and he spent 40 days there, just as Moses had spent 40 days praying and fasting before receiving the Commandments.

KEY POINTS

- 1) **Point #1** Praying and fasting is primarily about decluttering. We must declutter; focus our pursuit; remember to be hungry for God; before we can receive revelation. In practical terms, this decluttering will be abstinence from TV and Internet, fast food & comfort food, various routines - all in the pursuit of opening space for God.
- 2) **Point #2** Prayer and fasting can lead to provision, direction, and deliverance. Pastor Hurmon used an example from his own life to illustrate a time of melancholy and burden which was redeemed during a season seeking extended time with God; and led to discernment, direction, and clarity. We cannot see "breakthrough signs" if we're not paying attention.
- 3) **Point #3** We should pray for people who are estranged from God, perhaps with ourselves as a starting point. Our prayers should always start with praise and thanksgiving before petition. We should think about the needs around us, and the specific needs of those who don't know God and/or are deeply removed from God.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Each of us fasts in our own way. Take some time to identify the clutter in your life. Focus on one thing that would be a good candidate to give up for the 40 days until Easter.
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - Decluttering through fasting creates the space to hear God speaking to us. Where do you need direction, help, or a breakthrough? What is the hardest thing about trying to create more space for prayer and reflection? What are one or two practical things you can do to overcome these challenges?
- 3) **DO** - Identify the time in the day when you are going to pray to God during this season of preparation. Refer to Psalms 9:1-2 (NLT) if you need some verses to kickstart your prayer session. Commit today by claiming "I will prepare!"